

introduced to the troops as a relatively unknown radio entertainer. Over the decades, Bob Hope became known to everyone. After a quarter century performing for the USO, he estimated that he had traveled 2 million miles to entertain 11 million troops. He loved every minute of it, including the traveling partners he was able to recruit. As he put it, "How else would I get to travel with Lana Turner, Ann-Margret, and Raquel Welch, and have my wife wish me, 'Bon voyage?'" [Laughter]

Bob Hope's love for the troops won America's lasting respect. In 1963, President Kennedy presented him with the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his service to the troops. At the ceremony, Hope told him, "I feel very humble, but I think I have the strength of character to fight it." [Laughter] Bob Hope liked to joke about Hollywood's reputation for self-involvement. But the truth is that he took his responsibility to the troops very seriously. He was proud of the chance to make them feel better, at least for a while. And he once said that whenever the troops applauded, it was the best sound in the world.

We may never have an entertainer so closely linked to the USO, but we can be grateful that a new generation of performers is stepping forward to support our men and women in uniform. Some of these generous entertainers are with us tonight. Many of you have gone to dangerous war zones to support our troops. And your love and support has made a world of difference. I think we all know the moment

things began to turn around in Iraq: It's when the USO decided to deploy Jessica Simpson. [Laughter]

As Commander in Chief, I greatly appreciate all the entertainers supporting the USO. I thank you for what you're doing, and I encourage more to step forward and join you.

And I appreciate the thousands of USO volunteers who are supporting the war effort and lifting morale. These volunteers are providing vital aid to members of America's Armed Forces in service centers around the world. They're helping our troops get in touch with their loved ones back at home. They're easing the burdens on our military families by offering them an open hand and a shoulder to lean on.

To all the supporters of the USO: Our Nation is grateful for your dedication to our men and women in uniform. I join you in prayer for the safety of our troops and the success of their missions. May the USO continue to stand with our troops in times of war, and may we all live to see a world that stands in peace.

Thank you for having me, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:21 p.m. at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sloan D. Gibson IV, president and chief executive officer, USO; Sam Donaldson, correspondent, ABC News, in his capacity as master of ceremonies for the 2008 USO World Gala; entertainers Ann-Margret Olsson, Raquel Welch, and Jessica Simpson.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Business Leaders on Economic Stabilization

October 2, 2008

I want to thank the job creators who have joined me here today to talk about the state of the economy and the need for the House of Representatives to pass

the bill that passed the Senate last night with an overwhelming bipartisan majority.

Our discussion today centered around credit. I know there's a lot of discussions

in the newspapers and on TV about the credit freeze. Well, let me tell you what this means. It means that if you're running a small company and you need to make payroll or you need to make sure you got inventory to be able to sell a product or you want to expand so you can hire somebody, you need to have credit. You need to be able to have money on a regular basis from your local banker.

And the problem is, because people are worried about the future, they're worried the Government won't act, credit is frozen. People aren't lending money from bank to bank, or they're not lending money to our medium- and small-sized businesses.

And that means people's jobs are in jeopardy. And the bill that's before the House of Representatives tomorrow is a bill that has got the best chance of providing liquidity, providing credit, providing money so small businesses and medium-sized businesses can function.

A lot of people are watching the House of Representatives now to determine whether or not they will be able to act positively on a bill that has been improved. People say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, the insurance for the FDIC goes up to \$250,000. That's an improvement to the

legislation, not only for banks, but for credit unions as well.

And so I'm talking to people who are, you know, who come from the heartland, that understand what's taking place in our economy today, people who understand that the House of Representatives needs to pass this piece of legislation.

And I want to thank you all for going up and telling these Members of Congress what's on your mind and how this affects your businesses at home and how it affects the communities in which you live. This thing—this issue has gone way beyond New York and Wall Street. This is an issue that's affecting hard-working people. They're worried about their savings; they're worried about their jobs; they're worried about their houses; they're worried about their small businesses. And the House of Representatives must listen to these voices and get this bill passed so we can get about the business of restoring confidence.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 1424. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of General David D. McKiernan as Commander of United States Armed Forces in Afghanistan *October 2, 2008*

Today the Senate confirmed General David D. McKiernan as commander of U.S. Forces, Afghanistan. This newly created position and realignment of the command structure provides General McKiernan authority over nearly all U.S. forces in Afghanistan, ensuring greater coordination in operational planning and execution. General McKiernan will continue to

serve as commander of the International Security Assistance Force.

General McKiernan's new responsibilities will strengthen both U.S. and NATO efforts in Afghanistan. I congratulate General McKiernan on his confirmation and commend the Senate for its quick action on this important nomination.